

Lambda Letters Project

32594

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History Is Funny Sometimes

Lavender Library, Archives
and Cultural Exchange
Sacramento, CA

In the early 1960s ultraconservative publisher William F. Buckley, Jr., ran for the U.S. Senate from New York. During the campaign a reporter asked what he would do if, after the election, it was reported he had won. He replied, "I'd demand a recount!" He was a wit as well as a publisher.

Mr. Buckley realized his chances in the election were slim to none. But, he believed in conservatism enough to work at it no matter how bad things looked at the time. How things do change! Now a sure way of defeating a candidate is to label him or her a "liberal." Everything is turned around now. History is funny that way.

At the beginning of this year would you have believed a strong gay rights bill would have been passed in California this year? Would you have expected passage of a law to require the counting of hate crimes against transgendered people or a law to require that health insurers offer domestic partner health coverage? No need for a recount. These laws didn't pass. The chance of their passage this year had always been slim to none.

So why try? William Buckley's story illustrates the reason. He and other conservatives laid the foundation,

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Please Return Your Signed Letters to Us!

Periodically we find members who don't know that we want them to return their signed letters to Lambda Letters headquarters rather than send them directly to their legislators.

We do this for two reasons. First, we like to know how many letters our work is generating. That helps us measure the effectiveness of Lambda Letters. It also helps us respond to legislators who claim they are receiving no mail on the issues we cover. In addition, being able to publicize the return rate of our letters is good public relations. It helps us generate support for the Project.

Second, we need to know who is and who is *not* responding to our letters. We don't care which letters our members sign. Anyone has a right to agree or disagree with us on a particular issue. However, if a member sends us no letters for several months in a row, we may have a problem. We like to check with the member to see if she or he still wants to receive our mailings. If not, we can cut costs by removing him or her from our mailing lists. So please do return your signed letters to Lambda Letters in the envelope provided.

Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters Collected

September, 1997	7,238 letters
In all of 1997	41,582 letters

Dollars Spent

September, 1997	\$1,364
In all of 1997	\$12,693

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy, and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

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Publication of the name of any person or organization in articles or advertising in the Lambda Letters Project newsletter is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person or organization.

Confidentiality

The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly except in December by the
Lambda Letters Project Inc.,

6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Postmaster: send address changes to the address above.

Advertising Rates

Business-card sized ads (3½" x 2") \$10 per issue,
quarter-page ads \$20 per issue, half-page ads \$30 per issue,
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along with your name and phone number, is the 25th of each month.

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San Jose* (415-557-7878)

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Stockton (209-948-7770)

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*These cities share an office.



Change of Address Form

Please change my address to:

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Support AIDS Planning

By Eva Lujan

Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) has introduced H.R. 1219, the Comprehensive HIV Prevention Act of 1997. This is an important bill and it needs our support.

Basically, H.R. 1219 would promote prevention of HIV/AIDS through programs of public education, research, and counseling for women and substance abusers. Besides 40,000 new HIV infections each year, the number of AIDS cases among women is rising more quickly than among men, and sex with infected men has overtaken drug use as the leading cause of infection among women, federal researchers say. However, the number of AIDS cases among women is still smaller than among men.

How comprehensive is this bill? The general authority and responsibility would pass to the Secretary of Human and Health Services, Donna Shalala. In consultation with an advisory committee, the Secretary would develop a plan for expenditure of appropriations for the Centers for Disease Control, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Substance Abuse and Mental Services Administration, and research at the National Institutes of Health.

The focus of the HIV prevention programs would include the following:

- Outreach to women: a variety of HIV prevention services through family-planning clinics, community health centers, substance abuse treatment programs, and other primary care settings.
- Epidemiology: authorizes a federal program, as well as grants to states and local health depart-

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Silence is the virtue of fools.
— Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

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Oppose English-Only Initiative

By Boyce Hinman

Signatures are now being gathered for a ballot initiative that would essentially require all public school classes in California to be taught only in English. We urge you not to sign the petition to put this initiative on the ballot. Please also write to your Assemblymember, urging him or her to speak out against the initiative.

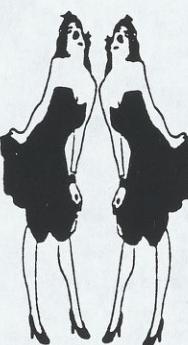
The opponents of bilingual education introduced two bills this year to get this concept through the state legislature. Lambda Letters, with the help of our members, played an important part in the defeat of those bills. We need your help now to defeat this latest attempt to disadvantage limited English students by requiring that all classes be taught only in English.

To get to the heart of the issue, imagine your parents moved to China when you were ten years old. From then on, your schooling was taught entirely in Chinese. You'd probably learn nothing for the first six months and very little during the second six months. Later, your schooling would be a struggle, because teachers would assume you had learned the material taught in the earlier classes. For example, when teaching fractions, your teacher might assume you had already learned your multiplication tables.

With bilingual education, on the other hand, you could have been learning your multiplication tables in English while you were learning Chinese. Then, once you had mastered Chinese, you could switch to all Chinese classes and still be up to speed on all your school subjects.

It's this kind of assistance to limited English students that the English-only initiative, if passed, will

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the Lesbian & Gay Community

916/923-1363

Back to School... And Then Some

By Hilary Cook

GLSEN—the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network—originally planned their “Back to School” campaign as a letter writing effort where LGB adults would contact their former schools to educate them about the effects of anti-gay bias on young people through their own personal stories. The campaign was such a success that they decided to add a political component. This fall they are collecting postcards and letters to Secretary of Education Richard Riley to show him that there is a large constituency demanding that the Clinton Administration take action on safe schools.

GLSEN is the only national organization specifically dedicated to addressing lesbian and gay issues in K-12 schools. GLSEN’s mission is “to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected, regardless of sexual orientation.” In addition to the Back to School campaign, they recently produced report cards on schools around the country. Overall, U.S. schools rated a D.

The 1993 Massachusetts Governor’s Commission Report on Gay and Lesbian Youth found that 97 percent of students in public high schools reported regularly hearing homophobic remarks from their peers, while 53 percent of students had heard such remarks from school staff. The National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce reported that 45 percent of gay men and 20 percent of lesbians said they had experienced verbal harassment and/or physical violence as a result of their sexual orientation during high school. And in Seattle, a study on teen health risks found that for every gay youth that was harassed, about four heterosexual students had experienced anti-gay harassment. It’s not surprising, then, that schools are on the verge of flunking out when the safety and well-being of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are assessed.

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Lavender
Valentines

Gary Nelson & Dennis Dudley
~ 22 years ~
Boyce Hinman & Larry Beaty
~ 27 years ~

Let us know when your anniversary occurs!

Support Medical Research for Women

By Carla Leek

Representative Maxine Waters (D-Los Angeles) has introduced H.R. 2130, the Women’s Cardiovascular Diseases Research and Prevention Act. The bill is currently awaiting hearing in the House Subcommittee on Health and Environment. Although the media focus of late has been on breast cancer, and breast cancer is indeed epidemic among women, cardiovascular diseases kill over five times as many women every year as breast cancer.

The United States has a high rate of cardiovascular disease, often attributed to our high-fat, low-exercise lifestyles. In the U.S., cardiovascular disease strikes more men than women, and past research has focused almost exclusively on men. Women of color are particularly slighted in research.

Women and men experience and survive cardiovascular diseases differently. Statistics show striking differences between women and men—and, among women, between white women and racial and ethnic minorities. The problem is that no one knows the “whys” behind the statistics.

What researchers do know is that some treatments, especially estrogen therapy, seem to show great promise in reducing cardiovascular problems in women. Large research projects on women are needed to establish the root causes of cardiovascular problems in women, and to create and test treatments.

H.R. 2130 will provide researchers with funds to begin pursuing such projects. Please sign the letter to Michael Bilirakis, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Health and Environment, and return it with your other signed letters to us.

Deborah A. Brooks
Certified Public Accountant



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State Legislative Update: Part VII

Here is a report on the status (as of late October) of the bills covered in our monthly newsletter and sample letters, as well as those covered in our frequent e-mail alerts. We have divided them into the four issue areas that we cover. Note that the list does not include bills that we covered in earlier months, but which died along the way. Each month we eliminate bills that were reported as defeated in the previous month's newsletter.

Under the rules of the state legislature, each bill had to be approved by its house of origin and sent to the governor no later than September 12th. Any bill failing to meet that deadline died. However, either house of the legislature could "grant reconsideration" of a bill that was not approved and sent to the governor by the deadline. This means the bill's author may bring the bill up again for reconsideration when the legislature reconvenes next January.

The governor had to sign or veto any bills sent to him by no later than October 12th. If he failed to take any action on a bill by that date, the bill became law without his signature.

HIV/AIDS Issues

A.B. 29 (Villaraigosa, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To allow compassionate release of terminally ill prisoners.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Signed by the governor.

A.B. 1099 (Migden, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To continue Medi-Cal eligibility without a share of cost, or with a reduced share of cost, for individuals who return to work and are being treated for symptoms of HIV/AIDS or are disabled. These provisions would only apply until a person is eligible for and receives full medical insurance coverage, including prescription drug coverage, from his or her employer.

LLP Position: Support.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.

S.B. 1035 (Polanco, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To establish a pilot project to study the cost effectiveness of early intervention for HIV-positive patients who otherwise qualify for Medi-Cal but are not yet disabled (generally those who do not have full-blown AIDS).

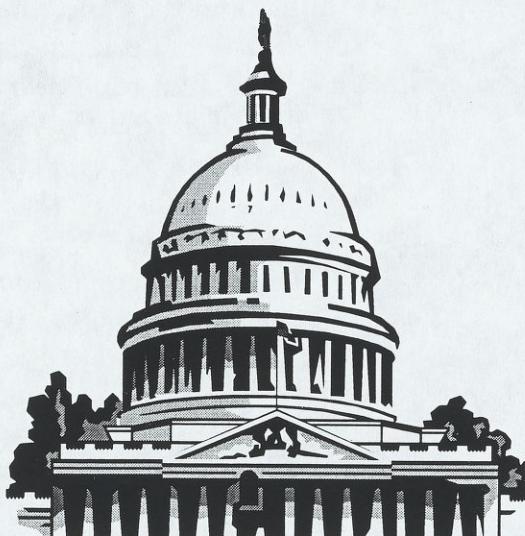
LLP Position: Support.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.

L/G/B/T Issues

A.B. 257 (Villaraigosa, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To add a ban on sexual orientation-based discrimination to the Fair Employment and Housing Act. Would ban such discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations.

LLP Position: Support.
Status: Vetoed by the governor.



People of Color Issues

A.B. 51 (Murray, D-Culver City)

Purpose: To increase penalties for hate-based arson of churches.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Signed by the governor.

A.B. 748 (Escutia, D-Huntington Park)

Purpose: To require that objective annual studies be done of the primary languages of limited English-proficient students and of their progress in learning English. Results of the study would be used to determine how to modify and improve the methods of teaching English to limited English-proficient students.

LLP Position: Support.
Status: Signed by the governor.

S.B. 273 (Burton, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To establish the California Prostate Cancer Fund to finance research into the cause, treatment, and cure of prostate cancer.

LLP Position: Support.
Status: Signed by the governor.

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Legislative Update

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Women's Issues

A.B. 45 (Murray, D-Culver City)

Purpose: To add a fiancé(e) or someone with whom a domestic abuser has had a dating relationship to the list of legally recognizable victims of domestic abuse.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Signed by the governor.

A.B. 200 (Kuehl D-Encino)

Purpose: To require that the health, safety, and welfare of the child must be the judge's primary concern when determining who should have custody or visitation rights. If the judge grants custody to someone who is alleged to have a history of committing child or domestic abuse, then the court's order should specify why that person is being granted custody or visitation rights.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Signed by the governor.

S.B. 70 (Hayden, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To require insurance providers that cover mastectomies to also cover mammography, complications from a mastectomy, and prosthetic devices or reconstructive surgery to restore and achieve symmetry for a patient.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Vetoed by the governor.



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Third Annual Youth Lobby Day

LIFE Institute and LIFE (California's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and HIV/AIDS Lobby) have announced plans for their third annual Youth Lobby Day. The Youth Lobby Day, founded in 1995, is the statewide effort to educate and empower lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and straight youth. The event is set for January 21, 1998, and will consist of educational activities throughout the day at the State Capitol and the historic Crest Theatre.

The Youth Lobby Day is co-sponsored by *Frontiers* newsmagazine, incite! web site, and *Outward* newsmagazine. The goals of the event are to educate young people about the issues that affect their lives, the legislative process, and avenues for effecting change; to educate the California State Legislature about youth and their needs; and last, for participants to have a great time, make new friends, and be empowered.

On January 3, 1996, over 350 young people from all over California came to Sacramento to meet and learn about their elected officials and the legislative process. In 1997 over 550 youth participated—almost double the previous year's number! On January 21, 1998, honoring Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, this inspiring event will take place again. The 1998 Youth Lobby Day will include workshops, caucuses and other special events, as well as visits with elected officials.

If you would like more information about participating or volunteering for the 1998 Youth Lobby Day, please send an e-mail request to ellen.mccormick@lifelobby.com or call LIFE at (916) 444-0424.

In Memorium

For
James Echols

1956 - 1997

Wilmer and Betty Hornbostel

No Letters in December

In December we give all our volunteers a well-deserved rest. As a result, you will receive no mailing from us next month. Please know that we deeply appreciate the wonderful support that we have received from the community throughout the year. We will write to you again in January. In the meantime, happy holidays!

Your E-mail Address Is Needed

We developed a very effective e-mail alert system this year. Using the Internet, we have flashed information on late-breaking legislative issues to Lambda Letters members and urged them to provide immediate input to their legislators on those issues. Last month alone members sent over 4,000 messages to the legislature on the issues we cover.

You can get in on the action too! Simply e-mail your Internet address to us at LambdaLP@aol.com and we'll put you on our alert list. Please don't send your address by regular (snail) mail, as it is easier for us to cut and paste your address into our alert list from your incoming e-mail message than it is to type it in by hand (and possibly input a typo in the process).

Hot News!

Sacramento Quick Print
has closed the retail
location on J Street, but
continues to be
a proud supporter of the
Lambda Letters Project.

Joanne Moore,
printing consultant
(916) 442-5615 voice mail
(916) 442-6891 fax

English-Only Initiative

Continued from page 3

ban. This initiative will condemn many limited English students to poor academic performance for the rest of their school years because they will fail to comprehend the important information being taught in English before they master the language. Poor academic performance limits the skills they bring to the job market. That hurts them, by diminishing their earning potential, but it also hurts employers. Employers need workers with the skills taught in our schools. If they can't find job applicants with those skills, they must either make do with low-skilled employees or provide remedial education to those employees. Either way, the employer's profit margin is reduced.

There has been some suggestion that the Latino/a community supports the English-only initiative. However, the following organizations oppose it:

- ◆ The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
- ◆ The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
- ◆ The California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation (CRLA)
- ◆ The California Latino Civil Rights Network
- ◆ The Association of Mexican American Educators (AMAE)
- ◆ Multi-Cultural Education Training and Advocacy (META)
- ◆ The California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)
- ◆ The California School Boards Association
- ◆ The Association of California School Administrators
- ◆ The California Federation of Teachers

Please do not sign the English-only initiative and please use the letter enclosed with this newsletter to your Assemblymember. Urge him or her to speak out against this initiative.

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History Is Funny Sometimes

Continued from page 5

during unlikely times (from a conservative's point of view), for the flowering of conservative power during a later era.

I've recently been reading a fascinating history of the Stonewall riots by gay historian Martin Duberman. The facts he presents clearly illustrate that the Stonewall riots would not have occurred—or would have been just a brief glimmer of resistance—if there had not been considerable growth in the l/g/b/t community in the two decades that preceded the riots.

In the 1950s the police regularly arrested gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered people simply for being in a gay bar. In New York state a bar could lose its license if it served known homosexuals. Men could be arrested for wearing "provocative" swimsuits at the beach. The newspapers regularly published the names and places of employment of those arrested. Often bribes to the police were the only way to gain release from jail prior to trial.

Most of the bars in New York and many other cities were run by the Mafia, who paid regular bribes to the police for the right to stay in business. Things were so bad that even Harvey Milk, who lived in New York at the time, was deeply afraid that his employers might discover he was gay and fire him.

Yet during that same period (in the early 1950s) the Daughters of Bilitis (DOB) was founded. It was the first modern civil rights organization to serve the lesbian community. Two of our current members of the Lambda Letters Project, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, were prominent among its founders. The Mattachine Society, primarily male, was founded at the same time. Both groups developed chapters across the country.

Another l/g/b/t civil rights group, One Incorporated, was formed in the mid 1950s. The Society for Individual Rights, a homosexual civil rights group, was formed in San Francisco in the early 1960s. Also in the early 1960s a number of l/g/b/t groups formed the North American Conference of Homophile Organiza-

tions (NACHO) in an attempt to coordinate their civil rights activities. Stonewall occurred in 1969, but as early as 1960 quiet gay rights demonstrations were occurring in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia and the White House in Washington, D.C.

So, am I disappointed that we didn't get the laws passed that we wanted this year? You betcha! Are these tough times to pass laws that protect the l/g/b/t community? Yes again! Might it be better just to give up and wait for better times? Absolutely not! We need to do the groundwork now that will make gains possible in a better time.

Boyce Hinman

Administrator

Become An Advocate!

Become our people of color advocate and help us choose one subject a month (usually a piece of legislation) that is of concern to the people of color community. You'll spend only about 10-12 hours a month researching possible subjects and composing letters and articles. Do you have Internet access? Lambda Letters can provide leads on sources of information and advice on composing letters and articles. This exciting position enables you to have a direct impact on legislation that affects our daily lives.

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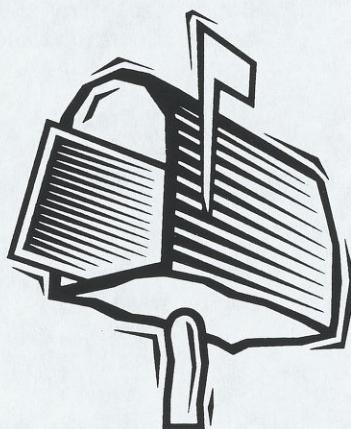
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AIDS Planning

Continued from page 3

- ments, for collecting data to determine where new HIV infections are most likely to occur.
- ♦ Community-based prevention programs: a grant program to promote community-based activities to reduce the number of new HIV infections.
- ♦ Counseling and testing: to conduct counseling, testing, referral, and partner-notification programs. Provides requirements for pre-test and post-test counseling, informed consent, and confidentiality.
- ♦ Rape victims: counseling on HIV and other STDs, as well as treatment and related services consistent with guidelines to be developed by the CDC.
- ♦ Specific populations: a national program for special projects including specific populations, such as the hemophilia community and ethnic minority groups.
- ♦ Research and demonstration projects: establishes a national program, as well as grants to state and local health departments, to conduct basic research and prevention projects.

Please sign the attached letter to your representative, urging him or her to cosponsor H.R. 1219.



Back to School...

Continued from page 4

Currently around the country there is a groundswell of support for making schools safe for students of all sexual orientations. We hope that by throwing our support behind GLSEN's letter campaign this month we can help them demonstrate to the Clinton Administration that there is a large constituency that cares about this issue, and that the time has come to stop pushing it under the rug.

Please note that even though this letter is addressed to GLSEN, send it to the Lambda Letters Project in the enclosed envelope as usual. We will forward it.

Where to Get Those Entertainment Books?

Currently three retail stores in Sacramento are selling Entertainment Books on behalf of Lambda Letters. We are looking for more individuals or stores, from throughout the state, who would be willing to sell the books for us. Please let us know if you would be willing to do so. The three current outlets for the books are:

- ♦ Compustations, 1819 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95814
- ♦ *Outward* Newsmagazine, 709 28th Street, Sacramento, CA 95816
- ♦ Dr. Cameron Yee, Optometrist, 6407 Riverside Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95831

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- Steve Pieters, AIDS Activist

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- Out Sounds, Gay Music Guide

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- Jallen Rix, Triam Music

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Notes from Lesbian History

- ♦ 580s BC: Sappho's famed girls' school flourishes on the Isle of Lesbos.
- ♦ 60 AD: Boudicca (or Boadiciea), Chieftess of the Iceni of the East Anglia, leads Celtic rebellion against Roman invaders, destroying cities of Colchester, St. Albans and capturing London. She was finally defeated after the Romans brought in reinforcements, and rather than be humiliated by them, she poisoned herself. Many feel her name (pronounced *boo-dee-ka*) is the origin of "bulldyke."
- ♦ 380: Gregory of Nazianzus orders first burning of Sappho's poetry.
- ♦ 900s: Judith, Queen of Falasha, captures capital of Ethiopia. She rules for 40 years until her death in 977.
- ♦ 1073: Ecclesiastical authorities of Constantinople and Rome order all remaining copies of Sappho's poetry destroyed.
- ♦ 1260: The Orleans Legal School orders women found guilty of lesbian acts have their clitoris removed for their first offense. Second offenders further mutilated and third offenders burned at the stake.



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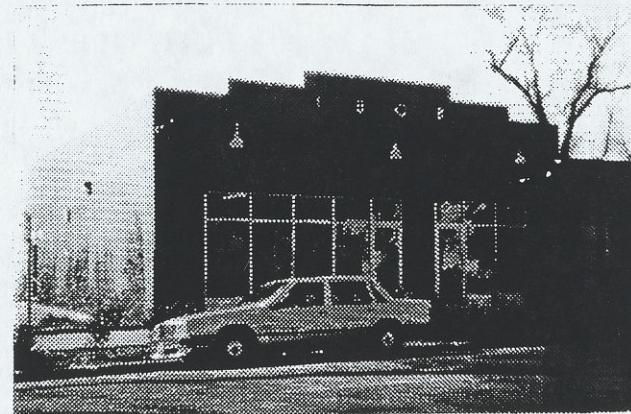


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